

Message Text

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CDR DARCOM ALEXANDRIA IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 01301

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, UNDER-
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, AND ASD/ISA (EUROPEAN REGION);
JCS FOR J-5

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MMOL, GW
SUBJECT: TANK GUN: DEFENSE MINISTRY PRESS STATEMENT

1. ON THE AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 23, THE DEFENSE MINISTRY
PRESS SPOKESMAN (DR. FISCHER) MADE THE FOLLOWING STATE-
MENT ON THE TANK GUN AND ON THE VISIT TO BONN OF DR.
WALTER LA BERGE, UNDERSECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

2. BEGIN TEXT (INFORMAL TRANSLATION): ON SEVERAL
DIFFERENT OCCASIONS IN RECENT DAYS I HAVE BEEN ASKED
ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE GERMAN 120 MM TANK GUN IN THE
DECISION PROCESS IN THE UNITED STATES. I HAVE ALREADY
SAID THAT THERE IS NO TRUTH TO REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON
THAT THE DECISION HAS ALREADY BEEN TAKEN, AND I CAN
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EXPAND ON THAT AS FOLLOWS: ACCORDING TO AMERICAN
EXPERTS, THE GERMAN GUN CAME OUT THE BEST IN THE
TRILATERAL SHOOTING TESTS IN THE UNITED STATES. THE
PENTAGON IS NOW IN THE PROCESS OF DECIDING WHICH GUN
SHOULD IN FACT BE ADOPTED FOR THE XM-1 TANK. IN PRE-
PARING THIS DECISION, A TELEPHONE CALL TOOK PLACE ON
FRIDAY EVENING BETWEEN THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF

DEFENSE, BROWN, AND THE GERMAN DEFENSE MINISTER. ON SATURDAY MORNING, AN AMERICAN DELEGATION HEADED BY THE UNDERSECRETARY OF THE ARMY, DR. LA BERGE, ARRIVED HERE. THIS DELEGATION NEGOTIATED WITH A GERMAN DELEGATION HEADED BY STATE SECRETARY DR. SCHNELL ON SATURDAY, SUNDAY AND ALSO THIS MORNING, AND IT IS NOW FLYING BACK TO THE UNITED STATES. IN THE NEGOTIATION IT WAS A MATTER OF CLARIFYING A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL DETAILS. ONE OF THESE, WHICH CAN BE SEEN HERE, IS BASED ON THE FACT THAT THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED BY THE CONGRESS TO SUBMIT A DECISION BY FEBRUARY 1. END QUOTE.

3. A GERMAN GOVERNMENT PRESS SHEET DESCRIBING THE RESULTS OF THE FISCHER PRESS CONFERENCE SAYS FISCHER REFUSED TO SAY WHAT THE RESULTS OF THE TALKS (BETWEEN DR. LA BERGE AND THE GERMAN SIDE) HAD BEEN. IT REPORTS FISCHER AS TELLING THE PRESS THAT A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL DETAILS WERE DISCUSSED, "INCLUDING THE CLARIFICATION OF LICENSING QUESTIONS." ACCORDING TO THE PRESS SHEET, FISCHER SAID THE LA BERGE DELEGATION WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO REACH A DECISION, BUT THAT THE DECISION WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE PENTAGON. FISCHER REPEATED THAT THE GERMAN GUN CAME OUT THE BEST IN THE SHOOTING TESTS. FISCHER REFUSED TO ANSWER THE QUESTION OF WHETHER CHANCES FOR A LICENSING ARRANGEMENT FOR THE GERMAN CONFIDENTIAL

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GUN WERE GREATER AFTER THE WEEKEND TALKS. HE SAID: "I CANNOT JUDGE THAT, SINCE I CANNOT ANTICIPATE THE AMERICAN DECISION." HE SAID THAT, REGARDING LICENSING, THERE WERE "DETAILS TO BE CLARIFIED ON WHICH NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION HAD BEEN AVAILABLE." FISCHER SAID THAT ONLY THE GUN AND THE AMMUNITION FOR IT WERE DISCUSSED IN THE US-FRG TALKS IN BONN. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, FISCHER SAID A LICENSE COULD BE GRANTED FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF THE GUN IN THE UNITED STATES, BUT THAT IN THIS CASE A CERTAIN SUM WOULD HAVE TO BE PAID AS COMPENSATION FOR THE FACT THAT THE GUN WAS NOT PRODUCED IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY.

5. COMMENT: IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC MEDIA, THE EMBASSY WILL SAY THAT A DECISION ON THE TANK GUN IS STILL PENDING. WE SHALL MAKE NO ADDITIONAL COMMENT.
STOESSEL

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